

## Message Text

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14-10

ACTION AF-06

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3343

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0303

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PDEV AO

SUBJECT: AGOSTINHO NETO COUNTS ON RADICAL AFM SUPPORT

REF: LUANDA 0213

1. IN THE WAKE OF THE ABORTIVE COUP IN LISBON ON MARCH 11, MPLA PRESIDENT AGOSTINHO NETO HAS ADOPTED A HARD LINE IN HIS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ANDRADE, OR ACTIVE REVOLT, FACTION OF THE MOVEMENT. I REPORTED EARLIER THAT THE ANDRADE GROUP HAD DEMANDED AS THE PRICE OF THEIR COOPERATION WITH NETO ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR IDEAS, DEMOCRATIZATION OF PARTY DECISIONS AND THE REMOVAL OF LUCIO LARA TO A LESS SENSITIVE POSITION. LARA TOLD ME LATER THAT HE MIGHT BE MOVING ON TO OTHER DUTIES, A GOOD INDICATION THAT NETO WAS AT LEAST PLAYING ALONG WITH THE ANDRADE GROUP.

2. I HAVE NOW LEARNED THAT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE COUP ATTEMPT IN LISBON NETO ADOPTED A TOUGH STANCE TOWARD THE ANDRADE FACTION IN THE BELIEF THAT RADICALS IN THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) ARE IN CHARGE AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THAT THE MPLA CAN NOW COUNT ON SUBSTANTIAL MATERIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT FROM THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT.

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3. THE REAL VALUE OF ANY SUCH ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE THE

BACKING OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY IN ANGOLA IN THE EVENT OF MAJOR VIOLENCE. NETO HAS SENT HIS MILITARY COMMANDER, IKO CARREIRA, TO LISBON TO SEE IF HE CAN OBTAIN COMMITMENTS IN THIS REGARD. MEANWHILE, IN A CHARACTERISTICALLY BRUTAL GESTURE, NETO SENT LUCIO LARA AND ENRIQUE SANTOS, THE MPLA SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, TO A NEGOTIATING SESSION WITH THE ANDRADE FACTION ON MARCH 14. BOTH MEN ARE HARD LINE NETO FOLLOWERS AND LARA, OF COURSE, IS PART OF THE PROBLEM. BY THIS MEANS NETO SIGNALLED HIS NEW FOUND CONFIDENCE AND HIS CONTEMPT FOR THE ACTIVE REVOLT.

4. LIN A TALK WITH HIGH COMMAND GENERAL DE SILVA CARDOSO ON MARCH 18 I LEARNED THAT HE IS TRYING TO HELP BRING ABOUT AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO MPLA GROUPS IN THE INTEREST OF BETTER GOVERNMENT AND DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY. HE HAS BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE MPLA SINCE HE TOOK OFFICE AS IT IS THE WEAKEST LINK IN THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT, BOTH UNWILLING AND UNABLE TO COOPERATE FOR THE COMMON GOOD. THE QUALIFIED PEOPLE ARE IN THE ANDRADE FACTION AND THEIR PASSIVITY DEPRIVES THE PARTY OF BADLY NEEDED TALENT. JUST AS IMPORTANT, THE MPLA DECISION-MAKING APPARATUS IS IN THE HANDS OF MEN WHOSE PRINCIPAL AIM SEEMS TO BE TO OBSTRUCT.

5. CARDOSO PLANS TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ANDRADE FACTION TO DISCUSS WITH THEM THEIR PROSPECTS, TO IMPRESS UPON THEM THE NEED TO GET INVOLVED AND TO PERSUADE THEM THAT NETO HAS MISREAD THE SITUATION IN PORTUGAL, THAT IS, THAT THE AFM CAN DO VERY LITTLE FOR HIM. CARDOSO DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAS RECEIVED INTELLIGENCE THAT INDICATES CIVILIANS WORKING FOR AFM RADICALS HAVE ARRIVED IN LUANDA TO TALK WITH THE MPLA LEADERSHIP. CARDOSO HAS ALSO SENT OFF REPRESENTATIVE TO LISBON TO FIND OUT WHAT IS GOING ON AND WHETHER THERE IS ANY LIKELIHOOD OF A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ANGOLAN DECOLONIZATION PROCESS.

6. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID THAT IF NETO INSISTS ON TRYING TO FORGE A CLOSER LINK WITH RADICALS IN THE AFM HE WILL HURT HIS ALREADY DIM PROSPECTS FOR CONTROL OF ANGOLA AFTER INDEPENDENCE. THE MOOD IN ANGOLA IS ONE OF SEPARATION FROM PORTUGAL AND ITS POLITICAL CHAOS. BLACKS AND WHITES ALIKE WANT TO BE RID OF METROPOLITAN CONTROL AND NETO IS GOING TO FIND HIMSELF CONSIDERABLY WEAKENED, SAID CARDOSO, IF HE HITCHES HIS WAGON TO THE AFM IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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HOPE THAT IT WILL HELP HIM GAIN A PREEMINENT POSITION IN ANGOLA. AS FOR THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY IN ANGOLA, CARDOSO SAID THERE ARE ONLY TWO OR THREE RADICALS HERE AND THEY HAVE NO INFLUENCE.

7. CONTINUING WITH HIS COMMENTS ABOUT NETO, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID THAT HE HAS DONE VERY LITTLE TO TIGHTEN AND STRENGTHEN MPLA; HE HAS NO CHARISMA AND VERY LITTLE SENSE OF PRACTICAL POLITICS. CARDOSO SAID THAT NETO

IS HUNG UP ON THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND ADDED THAT  
SOME WITHIN NETO'S OWN GROUP ARE TALKING MORE AND MORE ABOUT  
MISTAKES HE HAS MADE AND THE DELETERIOUS EFFECT THEY HAVE HAD  
ON THE PARTY. CARDOSO DID NOT NAME THESE CRITICS, NOR WAS HE  
ABLE TO PINPOINT THE MISTAKES.

KILLORAN

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